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Overview

Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)

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This section contains the following subsection:

- Introduction
- The Conceptual Basis of ASCED
- Summary of ASCED Criteria
- Structure and Format of ASCED

Introduction

Australian Standard Classification of Education

The Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) is a statistical classification for use in the collection and analysis of data on educational activity and attainment.

ASCED has been developed as part of a national framework for the storage, exchange and dissemination of statistical and administrative data on educational activity in Australia. It replaces a number of education classifications used prior to 2001 for data from the various sectors of the Australian education system.

ASCED comprises two classifications: Level of Education and Field of Education. Both the level and field of education components can be used to report statistics on various aspects of educational activity, such as student enrolments by level of course or by field of study; teaching resources by level of course; financial resources by field; or educational attainment by level and field.

In designing ASCED, the need for a classification which catered for the requirements of all sectors of the Australian education system was the primary consideration. An additional consideration was the desirability for ASCED to be broadly comparable with the relevant international standard, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

These introductory chapters provide an overview of the conceptual basis and structure of ASCED, describe the ASCED code structure, and outline the format of the ASCED Level of Education and Field of Education definitions.

Development of ASCED

ASCED resulted from a planned review of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Classification of Qualifications (ABSCQ). The ABSCQ was created for use in the 1991 Census of Population and Housing and was progressively implemented in other ABS collections. It is a statistical classification designed primarily for the collection, presentation and analysis of data on post-school qualifications.

One of the main reasons for the review of the ABSCQ was that developments in education and training, particularly in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, together with the introduction of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) had greatly reduced the usefulness of the ABSCQ as a tool to assist in analysing education and training related data. Therefore in late 1997 the ABS consulted with a range of key users of education and training statistics to establish the requirements for reviewing the ABSCQ.

This consultation revealed problems arising from a lack of comparability between data collected and used by the different education and training sectors and by the ABS.

Difficulties with comparability were due mainly to the number of classifications in use within administrative and statistical systems. A clear outcome was that there was a need for a single national classification for the collection of statistics on educational activities by level of education and field of study. Developments in the provision of Australian education had sharpened the focus on these difficulties. These developments included:

- the blurring of traditional boundaries between secondary education, VET and higher education;
- the increasing range of levels at which any particular field of education can be studied;
- the possibility of articulation from qualifications in the VET sector to qualifications in higher education, through acceptance of attainment in the VET sector as credit towards higher qualifications; and
- an expanded range of education and training, and multi-sectoral educational institutions.

To satisfy the need for a single classification and in line with its national statistical coordination role and its responsibilities in setting statistical standards, the ABS undertook to develop a new national standard classification, which would be significantly broader in scope than the ABSCQ, and would replace the range of classifications used in administrative and statistical systems. The resultant classification, ASCED, will be an

important element of the Framework for Australian Education and Training Statistics currently being developed by the ABS.

The Level of Education component of ASCED was developed using the ABSCQ and the AQF as starting points, and then incorporated additional specific categories to cater for the needs of all users. An important issue in the development of ASCED was the need to include all sectors of the formal Australian education system; that is, schools, VET, and higher education. This enables the provision of consistent data on all aspects of education within the Australian context. The expanded scope is consistent with the approach taken in ISCED 1997 and facilitates international comparisons with Australian data on level of education.

The Field of Education component of ASCED uses a similar conceptual framework to the one used for the ABSCQ. It incorporates the results of extensive user consultation to better reflect the changing nature of education in Australia. It also aims to maintain comparability with data classified according to the various classifications used prior to the introduction of ASCED. Expert advice was sought to ensure that areas of activity which have become more prominent since the inception of the ABSCQ are adequately covered in ASCED.

Application of ASCED

From 2001, ASCED replaces the ABSCQ in all relevant ABS statistical collections, including the 2001 Survey of Education, Training and Information Technology, the Transition from Education to Work Survey, and the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, which all collect information on educational activity and/or attainment by level and field of education.

To facilitate the consistent use of ASCED in these collections and those conducted by other agencies, the ABS is developing a set of standard variables which will be released on the ABS Website as part of Standards for Statistics on Education and Training. These variables specify standard definitions of concepts, sets of questions, coding procedures and output classifications.

ASCED will also be used from 2001 onwards in data collections conducted by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

International Comparability

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

ISCED was developed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators

within and between countries. It was originally endorsed at the General Conference of UNESCO in 1978. The current version (ISCED 1997) was officially adopted in November 1997.

The ABS has designed ASCED to be as consistent with ISCED as possible. However, the needs of users and producers of statistics on education in Australia, and other factors unique to the Australian education system, have meant that total consistency has not been possible. Like ASCED, ISCED has separate dimensions of Level of Education and Field of Education.

In both ISCED and ASCED, Level of Education includes education from the earliest years of pre-school and school, through to advanced levels of higher education. ASCED was designed specifically to align closely with the AQF, which is used within the Australian education system. This framework incorporates qualification levels, titles and guidelines. These guidelines contain the main criteria for defining Australian qualifications and are not the same as the criteria for determining level of education in ISCED. The Level of Education component of ASCED has nevertheless been designed to allow for the provision of data classified to ISCED in line with international practice.

The criteria used to group fields of education in ISCED 1997 are the same as those used in ASCED. Despite the similarities between ISCED 1997 and ASCED in the conceptual approach to field of education, the classification criteria have not been applied in exactly the same way. The broad and narrow fields in ASCED have been designed to accurately reflect the reality of educational provision in Australia and thus differ from the groups at similar levels in ISCED 1997. Australian data classified to detailed fields in ASCED can, however, be converted to ISCED 1997 for international reporting purposes.

Correspondence tables providing comprehensive information on the relationship between ASCED and ISCED 1997 will be available on the ABS Website following the release of this publication.

Comparability with New Zealand

As part of the Closer Economic Relations agreement between Australia and New Zealand, it is the policy of the ABS and Statistics New Zealand (SNZ) to harmonise their approaches to collecting statistics whenever possible. Statistical harmonisation includes using joint or closely related classifications. In line with this policy, the ABS and SNZ worked together to ensure that a consistent approach was taken in developing ASCED and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED). However, differences between the education systems and the differing needs of users in the two countries have meant that full harmonisation between ASCED and NZSCED has not been possible at this stage.

The differences between the Australian and New Zealand Qualifications frameworks have led to differences between the level of education components of ASCED and NZSCED.

Although the ASCED and NZSCED Field of Education classifications use identical names for the broad and narrow fields, there are differences in the content of these categories at the detailed field level. While this may allow for meaningful comparison between Australian and New Zealand data for many purposes, this should be done with care, as the contents of the broad and narrow fields are not the same in all instances. It is anticipated that future revisions of ASCED and NZSCED will examine closely the possibility of a joint classification.

The Conceptual Basis of ASCED

The concept of education

Education can be broadly defined as the lifetime process of obtaining knowledge, attitudes, skills, and socially valued qualities of character and behaviour. Education is generally considered to involve an intent to bring about learning, and for most types of education involves communication from one person to another. This communication can involve a wide variety of channels and media - it may be oral or written; it may be delivered face-to-face or by other means.

Education can occur within a variety of environments, some more formal than others. At one end of the spectrum is formal education, provided in the traditional manner by schools, universities and other formal institutions, which is typically systematic, planned and organised ahead of time, and usually has some evaluation of achievement. At the other end of the spectrum is non-formal education, which is generally unstructured and unplanned, and may not involve any student-teacher relationship or evaluation of achievement. Non-formal education includes some types of on-the-job training and self-directed learning, such as reading or following self-guided tutorials on computers. Learning also occurs unintentionally in a variety of non-formal situations. For example, while relaxing, conversing with friends, watching television, or listening to the radio, people can pick up knowledge about the world. A significant element of the learning experience of children as they grow up is of an informal, unstructured and incidental nature.

ASCED was developed primarily to provide a framework for statistical and administrative data on educational activity and attainment in Australia, rather than to provide a full framework for unstructured, unplanned or incidental learning activities. In developing ASCED it was therefore appropriate to adopt as far as possible the concepts used in ISCED 1997, which defines education as "... all deliberate and systematic activities designed to

meet learning needs ...”.

The term “education” is used throughout this publication to refer to activities, formal or otherwise, which fall within this definition. The term is inclusive of the concept of training, because in the Australian context the traditional distinction between education and training has diminished and for many purposes is now inappropriate. Education is seen as extending beyond formal institutions and has become increasingly focused on producing marketable skills. Training now extends beyond vocational training institutions and the workplace, and is available in secondary schools, with students able to study for vocational certificates as part of their school work.

The scope of ASCED

It is intended that ASCED will provide the basis for consistency and comparability between data on a wide range of statistical variables collected from various data sources. While ASCED has been designed to be applied to a number of education related concepts such as a “qualification”, a “unit of study”, or a “module”, the notion of a “course of study” is still an important concept underpinning ASCED, particularly the Level of Education dimension. This is because it is generally, but not always, a course of study which leads to the award of a qualification attesting that an individual has achieved a particular level of educational attainment in a particular field.

In ASCED, all learning experiences which form part of a course leading to an award, or which include some form of assessment, are within scope of the classification.

However, some courses, and components thereof, and other activities which do not lead to an award, can also be classified to ASCED, even though ASCED may not have been specifically designed with this use in mind. For example, ASCED could be used to classify the in-house training activities of an organisation although there may be some such activities which may not be easily assigned to a specific ASCED category.

The entity being classified in ASCED can be best described simply as educational activity. Consideration has been given to how small an educational activity needs to be before it can no longer be separately identified as a unit at the base level of the classification. For the purposes of Level of Education this is relatively clear cut as there is likely to be some form of award as a result of the educational activity. The detailed level of education categories, therefore, generally equate to a course of study. For Field of Education, the practical consideration of the amount of detail worth collecting for general statistical reporting purposes imposes the only real constraint.

The structure of ASCED

ASCED has been designed to classify education according to the two main aspects which are of primary interest to users of statistics on educational provision and attainment. These are level of education, and field of education. To meet the varying needs of users and providers of such statistics, hierarchical classification structures for both level and field of education have been developed.

This approach provides sufficient flexibility to allow for detailed data where practicable, and aggregate data in other circumstances, to be classified to ASCED. The most detailed levels have been designed for use in administrative collections where it is possible to access the most detailed information. It is unlikely to be possible, however, to accurately collect information on the number of completed Master degrees by coursework in, for example, the Census of Population and Housing. In sample surveys, issues of confidentiality and sampling variability mean that, in general, only broader aggregate data can be released.

Statistics on educational activity classified to ASCED can be provided by level of education alone, field of education alone, or by level and field of education together. Data on level of education and field of education can be cross-classified independently with variables such as age, occupation and income.

Level of education

The concept of level of education used in ASCED is broadly consistent with the concept used in ISCED 1997, which states that “the notion of ‘levels’ of education is taken to be broadly related to gradations of learning experiences...”, and that “the level is related to the degree of complexity of the content of the programmes.” (UNESCO 1997, p.10). In addition, there was a need for the Level of Education component to be consistent with the AQF to enable all AQF qualifications to be associated with an ASCED category.

For the purposes of ASCED, Level of Education is defined as a function of the quality and quantity of learning involved in an educational activity.

The quality of learning can be considered in terms of three elements:

- theoretical/vocational learning - where theoretical learning is the understanding of principles, theories, ideas and the relationships between objects; and vocational learning is the ability to competently perform specific tasks which may relate to an occupation or group of occupations;
- factual learning - the understanding of sets of facts or information; and
- practical learning - developing the skills necessary for practical or vocational activities.

Higher levels of education are typically characterised by the greater significance of theoretical learning and greater complexity of factual and practical learning.

The quantity of learning is a function of the volume and complexity of the knowledge and skills associated with a particular educational activity. It can be operationalised in terms of the total learning time typically necessary to achieve a certain level of education. This comprises two elements - previous education required to participate in an educational activity and the amount of learning time typically required to complete the educational activity. In many cases individuals may complete a particular learning activity more quickly than the expected or typical time. For example, individuals may be awarded a qualification at a particular level of education through recognition of prior learning or assessment of skills and knowledge, rather than by participating in an educational activity for a specified length of time.

It follows from the above that the relationship between categories in the Level of Education classification should be essentially ordinal. In other words, educational activities at Broad Level 1 Postgraduate Degree should be at a higher level than those at the Broad Level 2 Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate and so forth. However, when this idea is applied to the reality of educational provision in Australia, it is not always possible to assert that an ordinal relationship exists among the various levels of education.

This is particularly evident in the case of the relationship between Certificates I-IV in Broad Level 5 Certificate Level, and Secondary Education included in Broad Level 6 Secondary Education. In this instance, the level of education associated with Secondary Education may range from satisfying the entry requirements for admission to a university degree course, to the completion of units in basic literacy, numeracy and life skills. Educational activity in these categories may therefore be of an equal, higher or lower level than Certificates found in Broad Level 5.

In the Level of Education classification, a pragmatic approach is taken towards the distinction and overlap between secondary education and vocational education, by grouping all secondary education in one broad category and Certificates I - IV in another. This approach offers the advantage of allowing poorly described observations in particular statistical collections to be allocated relatively easily to broad groups.

An ordinal relationship between the categories in Broad Level 5 Certificate Level and the categories in Broad Level 6 Secondary Education is not therefore implied. When the classification is used for statistical variables such as Level of Highest Educational Attainment, the case may arise of a person having obtained both a Senior Secondary qualification and a VET certificate. In this case it is necessary to determine which qualification should be reported as the person's highest level of educational attainment. To allow this to be done consistently in its statistical collections, the ABS has developed a decision table which allows the selection of the most appropriate qualification in these

circumstances. For example, if a person has obtained both a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (Year 12) and a Certificate III in Vehicle Mechanics, it is more useful for most statistical purposes to report the Certificate III as the highest qualification. The decision table will be provided in the documentation for the ABS standard statistical variable, Level of Highest Educational Attainment, which will be released on the ABS website as part of Standards for Statistics on Education and Training.

Criteria for level of education

Level of Education is measured operationally in terms of the following criteria:

- the theoretical/vocational orientation of the educational activity;
- the minimum entry requirements for the educational activity (i.e. the minimum amount of prior education needed to undertake the educational activity at that level); and
- the programme length or notional duration of the educational activity.

Theoretical/vocational orientation

The theoretical/vocational orientation of an educational activity is a function of theoretical, vocational, factual and practical learning. Education at all levels involves each of these types of learning, and the relative significance of each type varies according to the level of education. For example, at higher levels of education, theoretical learning is generally of primary significance, while practical learning is of primary significance in activities at lower levels of education.

Vocational learning, or competence specific to actual workplace practice, is the key element distinguishing qualifications in the VET sector.

Vocational learning is measured operationally in terms of the vocational element of the educational activity, which encompasses the range of application of knowledge and skills, the scope or context of application, and the level of autonomy. Some educational activities at higher levels are characterised by vocational learning that is more complex in nature than educational activities at lower levels.

Minimum entry requirements

The minimum entry requirements refer to the minimum level of knowledge, understanding and skill required to successfully undertake an educational activity at that level. Age and experience are sometimes accepted as an indication that a person possesses sufficient knowledge to undertake a particular educational activity successfully. Programmes requiring higher levels of knowledge for entry are considered to be at higher levels of education.

Programme length or notional duration

The programme length or notional duration is the expected length of time necessary to successfully acquire the requisite knowledge and skills. The duration will vary depending on the learning methods, industry involvement and the pathway. Pathways may include work-based training, school or institution-based training, an accumulation of short courses, or recognition of prior learning either wholly or in combination with a training programme.

When educational programmes have similar entry requirements, those requiring greater time for completion are usually considered to be at higher levels of education than shorter programmes. In the case of educational programmes being undertaken part-time, the equivalent full-time duration is considered. The increasing variety of pathways leading to the achievement of particular educational outcomes means that care should be exercised in using programme length or duration in determining the level of a particular educational programme and it should not be used in isolation from the other criteria.

Application of the criteria for level of education

The classification criteria specified above are used to organise individual educational activities into progressively smaller groups in a hierarchy. Broad Level of Education categories are distinguished from each other principally on the basis of theoretical/vocational orientation and entry requirements. Narrow Level of Education categories are distinguished from each other by considering the entry requirements and, where necessary, a stricter application of the theoretical/vocational orientation criterion. For Detailed Level of Education, a stricter application of both the entry requirements and the theoretical/vocational orientation and, where necessary, duration, are used to distinguish the categories. The detailed level of the classification also reflects additional attributes of the educational activity that are required for some statistical collections. These include educational activity distinguished on the basis of research rather than coursework, and the inclusion of categories to allow the identification of professional specialist qualifications, statements of attainment, and bridging and enabling courses.

When applying the criteria of minimum entry requirements and programme length (or notional duration) to an educational activity, it should be remembered that these two criteria can be influenced by whether an individual undertakes the educational activity through, for example, competency-based training or whether the individual received recognition and credit for skills and knowledge they already have, irrespective of how they attained the skills and knowledge. This means that a person may not be required to complete some components of an educational activity or indeed the entire educational activity, if they possess the necessary skills and knowledge through previous education or relevant work/life experiences.

In applying the above criteria to the task of designing and building a Level of Education classification which is practical and useful in the Australian context, a number of additional considerations were taken into account.

The most significant of these was the need for consistency with the existing framework used to describe qualifications in Australia, the AQF. As a result, all educational activities leading to the awarding of an AQF qualification are separately identified in the classification, and the boundaries between categories in the classification are consistent with those used in the AQF. The classification criteria themselves were designed to be compatible with the AQF, but are sufficiently independent to allow them to be applied to educational activities not covered by the AQF such as historical and overseas qualifications. The names used in the ASCED Level of Education classification are consistent with AQF names.

Other important considerations in designing the Level of Education classification include the need for international comparability and the need for ASCED to be used in a variety of statistical and administrative collections.

Field of education

Field of Education is defined as the subject matter of an educational activity. Fields of education are related to each other through the similarity of subject matter, through the broad purpose for which the education is undertaken, and through the theoretical content which underpins the subject matter.

Criteria for field of education

Field of Education is measured operationally in terms of the following criteria:

- theoretical content;
- purpose of learning;
- objects of interest;
- methods and techniques; and
- tools and equipment.

Theoretical Content

The theoretical content refers to the ideas and concepts included in an educational activity. It can be defined as that part of the subject matter which links facts together to explain other facts and predict outcomes.

Purpose of Learning

The purpose of learning refers to the ultimate aim of the skills and knowledge gained from

an educational activity. An educational activity generally focuses on certain types of problems or sets of tasks. The purpose of undertaking an educational activity is, therefore, to learn to deal with those problems or to perform a set of tasks.

Objects of Interest

The objects of interest are the phenomena, problems or entities studied. They are the “things” to which the student learns to apply the knowledge and skills of the educational activity. They may, for example, be mathematical problems, vehicles requiring repair, people with a particular illness, or ideas and theories on the nature of truth. This element relates primarily to factual learning.

Methods and Techniques

The methods and techniques are the specific procedures for applying the skills and knowledge gained from an educational activity. They may, for example, be steps for solving mathematical problems, techniques for repairing vehicles, or procedures for treating particular ailments.

Tools and Equipment

The tools and equipment are the instruments and implements which an individual learns to use and operate. This element relates primarily to practical learning and is the application of the methods and techniques learned.

Application of the criteria for field of education

The classification criteria specified above are used to organise individual fields of study into progressively smaller groups in a hierarchy. Broad Field of Education categories are distinguished from each other primarily on the basis of the theoretical content and the purpose of learning. Narrow Field of Education categories are distinguished from other narrow fields in the same broad field by considering the objects of interest and, where necessary, a stricter application of the purpose of learning criterion. Detailed Field of Education categories are distinguished from other detailed fields in the same narrow field on the basis of the methods and techniques, and the tools and equipment, or, where necessary, a stricter application of the criteria used for broad and narrow fields.

When ASCED is applied to educational activities, it should be noted that in many programmes the range of subject matter extends beyond the main field of education and often incorporates units of study from more than one of the broad fields presented in the classification. For example, a course leading to a qualification in Landscape Architecture may also include units of study related to design, botany and management. These units of study would be classified according to the theoretical content. For example, the unit of

study “botany” would be classified to the field “010903 Botany”; however the course as a whole would be classified to “040105 Landscape Architecture”.

In designing the Field of Education classification an important consideration was the need for time series analysis of data that, prior to the introduction of ASCED, were collected using a range of classifications of field of education. The following classifications were identified as the major ones for which time series data would be analysed:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Classification of Qualifications (ABSCQ);
- Field of Study Classification of Higher Education Courses (FOSCHEC);
- Field of Study Classification of Tertiary Education Courses (FOSCTEC);
- Classification of Higher Education Discipline Groups; and
- Discipline Group - VET.

Summary information and correspondence tables describing the relationship between ASCED and each of these classifications can be found in the appendices, and are available electronically on the ABS website www.abs.gov.au.

Statistical balance

As a general principle, a classification used for the dissemination of statistics should not have categories at the same level in its hierarchy which are too disparate in their population size. This is necessary to allow the classification to be used effectively for the cross-tabulation of aggregate data and the dissemination of data from sample surveys. For example, if some of the twelve ASCED broad fields of education accounted for only 2% or 3% of responses and another accounted for 60% or 70%, it would be difficult to use the classification for balanced analysis. This principle is referred to by the term “statistical balance”.

In ASCED, the statistical balance principle is compromised to some extent by the necessity to develop a classification that can be applied to a range of data items collected by a variety of agencies. It is not possible to ensure statistical balance if the classification spans both school and university education but the statistical collection is confined to data on schools only, or the collection has a particular focus. In these situations collection agencies are encouraged to use only that portion of the classification that is applicable to the collection.

Coding education information

This publication is a reference document intended to provide a detailed account of the content and structure of ASCED and to assist with the interpretation of statistics classified to it. It is not intended that this publication alone be used to code data to ASCED.

Assigning ASCED codes to level and field of education descriptions requires the use of a rule-based system to ensure that it is performed in an accurate, consistent and efficient manner. A computer-assisted coding system has been developed by the ABS for this purpose. This will be available on the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED) and Coder CD-ROM (Cat. no. 1272.0.30.002) together with the content of this printed publication. The contents of this printed publication and details concerning the ASCED Coder can be found on the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au.

Summary of ASCED Criteria

Components of ASCED

ASCED comprises two classifications - Level of Education and Field of Education.

Level of education

The level of education is defined as a function of the quality and quantity of learning involved in an educational activity.

Level of Education is measured operationally in terms of the following criteria:

- the theoretical and vocational orientation of the educational activity;
- the minimum entry requirements for the educational activity; and
- the programme length or notional duration of the educational activity.

Theoretical/Vocational Orientation

The theoretical/vocational orientation of an educational activity is measured in terms of the balance between theoretical, vocational, factual, and practical learning.

Minimum Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements refer to the minimum level of knowledge, understanding and skill required to successfully undertake an educational activity at that level.

Notional Duration

The programme length or notional duration is the expected length of time necessary to successfully acquire the requisite knowledge and skills.

Field of education

The field of education is defined as the subject matter of an educational activity.

Field of Education is measured operationally in terms of the following criteria:

- theoretical content;

- purpose of learning;
- objects of interest;
- methods and techniques; and
- tools and equipment.

Theoretical Content

The theoretical content refers to the ideas and concepts involved in an educational activity, and can be defined as that part of the subject matter which links facts together to explain other facts and predict outcomes.

Purpose of Learning

The purpose of learning refers to the ultimate aim of the skills and knowledge gained from an educational activity.

Objects of Interest

The objects of interest are the phenomena, problems or entities studied.

Methods and Techniques

The methods and techniques are the specific procedures for applying skills and knowledge.

Tools and Equipment

The tools and equipment are the instruments and implements used to apply the methods and techniques learned.

Structure and Format of ASCED

This section contains the following subsection :

- Level of Education
- Field of Education

Level of Education

Classification structure

Broad levels

Broad levels are:

- the broadest categories of the classification;
- denoted by 1-digit codes; and

- distinguished from each other on the basis of theoretical/vocational orientation and entry requirements.

In general the relationship between the broad levels is ordinal, in the sense that educational activities in Broad Level 1 are higher than those in Broad Level 2 and so forth. This is not the case in all instances, however; in particular educational activities in Broad Level 5 Certificate Level may be of an equal, higher or lower level than those classified in Broad Level 6 Secondary Education.

There are 9 broad levels.

Narrow levels

Narrow levels are:

- subdivisions of the broad levels;
- denoted by 2-digit codes - the relevant broad level code plus an additional digit; and
- distinguished from other narrow levels in the same broad level on the basis of the entry requirements and, where necessary, a stricter application of the theoretical/vocational orientation criterion.

There are 15 narrow levels.

Detailed levels

Detailed levels are:

- subdivisions of the narrow levels;
- denoted by 3-digit codes - the relevant narrow level code plus an additional digit; and
- distinguished from other detailed levels in the same narrow level on the basis of stricter application of the entry requirements, theoretical/vocational orientation and, where necessary, the notional duration.

The detailed level also meets particular statistical needs by differentiating educational activity based on research rather than coursework, professional specialist qualifications, statements of attainment, and bridging and enabling courses.

There are 64 detailed levels.

Residual categories

The codes of "9", "99" and "999" are residual codes for use for those educational activities which cannot be classified to a particular level of education.

Supplementary codes

Supplementary codes are used to process inadequately described responses in statistical collections. These codes are of two types:

- three digit codes ending in one or two zeros; and
- three digit codes commencing with one or two zeros, or codes with three zeros.

Codes ending in zero are described as “not further defined” (n.f.d.) and are used to code responses which cannot be coded to any detailed level in the classification but can be coded to a higher level of the classification structure.

For example, responses which cannot be identified as relating directly to a particular level category, but which are known to be within the range of levels within a particular broad level category are coded to that broad level. Such responses are allocated an “n.f.d.” code consisting of the one-digit code of the broad level followed by “00”. For instance, the response “Certificate” does not contain sufficient information to be coded directly to any particular detailed level category but can be coded to Broad Level 5 Certificate Level, which encompasses certificates. It is thus allocated the code 500 Certificate Level, n.f.d.

Codes commencing with zero are used to process responses which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any level of the structure and when there is no level of education information given. Other codes commencing with zero may be defined by users to facilitate the processing and storage of data, when data sets coded to ASCED contain records for entities outside the scope of ASCED. For example, these codes might be used for educational activities that are excluded from ASCED (e.g. hobby/recreational programmes).

Format of the definitions

This publication contains definitions for the broad, narrow, and detailed levels. The format of the definitions may vary slightly between the hierarchical levels, but all contain similar elements.

The features of the broad, narrow and detailed level definitions for Level of Education are:

- a lead statement which defines the category and sets the boundaries of the category;
- information on the theoretical/vocational orientation;
- information on the minimum entry requirements;
- information on the notional duration;
- a list of lower level categories contained in the category (not applicable for detailed level); and. a list of inclusions or exclusions (as necessary).

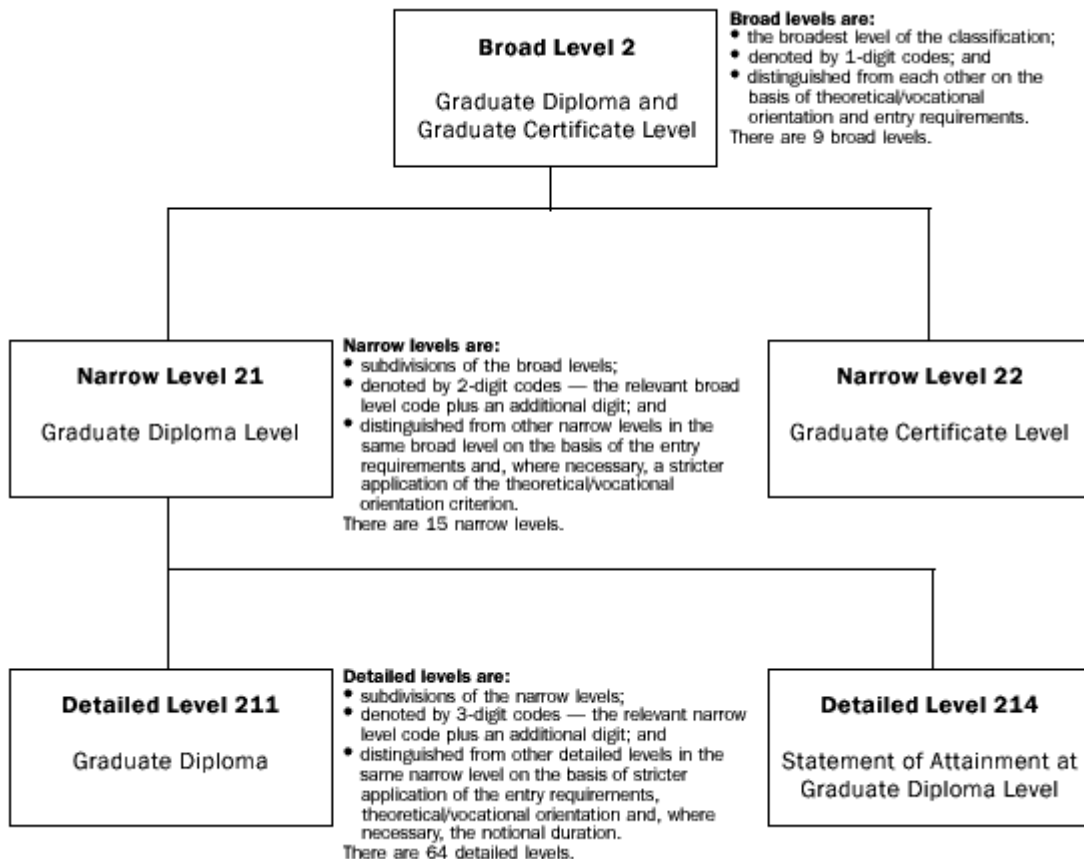
Profile of the Level of Education structure

The structure of ASCED Level of Education has three levels:

- broad level;
- narrow level; and
- detailed level.

The following is an illustration of a representative part of the Level of Education structure:

Illustration of a representative part of the Level of Education structure.



A tree diagram that shows how the structure of the ASCED Level of Education is split into three levels, broad field; narrow field; and detailed field. The top level is broad level 2 Graduate diploma and graduate certificate level, there are 9 broad levels. Broad levels are described as: the broadest level of the classification; denoted by 1-digit codes; and distinguished from each other on the basis of theoretical/vocational orientation and entry requirements. Broad level 2 splits into narrow level 21 Graduate diploma level and narrow level 22 Graduate certificate level. There are 15 narrow levels. Narrow levels are described as: subdivisions of the broad levels; denoted by 2-digit codes – the relevant broad level code plus an additional digit; and distinguished from other narrow levels in the same broad level on the basis of entry requirements and, where necessary, a stricter application of the theoretical/vocational orientation criterion. Narrow level 21 splits into detailed level 211 Graduate diploma and detailed level 214 Statement of attainment at graduate diploma level. There are 64 detailed levels. Detailed levels are described as subdivisions of the narrow levels; denoted by 3-digit codes – the relevant narrow level code plus an additional digit; and distinguished from other detailed levels in the same narrow level on the basis of stricter application of the entry requirements, theoretical/vocational orientation and, where necessary, the notional duration.

Field of Education

Classification Structure

Broad fields

Broad fields are:

- the broadest categories of the classification;
- denoted by 2-digit codes; and
- distinguished from each other on the basis of theoretical content and the broad purpose for which the study is undertaken.

There are 12 broad fields.

Narrow fields

Narrow fields are:

- subdivisions of the broad fields;
- denoted by 4-digit codes - the relevant broad field code plus two additional digits; and
- distinguished from other narrow fields in the same broad field on the basis of the objects of interest, and the purpose for which the study is undertaken.

There are 71 narrow fields.

Detailed fields

Detailed fields are:

- subdivisions of the narrow fields;
- denoted by 6-digit codes - the relevant narrow field code plus two additional digits; and
- distinguished from other detailed fields in the same narrow field on the basis of methods and techniques, tools and equipment, and a stricter application of the criteria used for broad and narrow fields.

There are 356 detailed fields.

Residual categories

Codes ending in "99" are allocated to fields of education which may belong to a particular broad or narrow field of education but which do not represent sufficient observations to be a distinct detailed field of education in their own right. These are the "other" or "not elsewhere classified" (n.e.c.) categories. These categories should not be used to code responses which are inadequately described or ambiguous.

Supplementary codes

Supplementary codes for field of education are:

- 6-digit codes ending in two or four zeros; and
- codes commencing with two or more zeros.

Codes ending in two or four zeros are described as “not further defined” (n.f.d.) codes and are used to assign Field of Education codes to responses to questions in statistical or administrative data collections which cannot be coded to any specific detailed field in the classification but can be coded to a higher level of the classification structure.

For example if the Field of Education is given as “law” it is not possible to identify which of the seven detailed categories of Law it should be coded to, but it can be coded to Narrow Field 0909 Law and would therefore be assigned the 6-digit code of 090900 Law, n.f.d. Similarly, responses which do not contain sufficient information to be related directly to a particular narrow field category but which are known to be within the range of a particular broad field are coded to that broad field. For example, if the Field of Education is given as “health” it can be coded to Broad Field 06 Health and allocated the code 060000 Health, n.f.d.

Codes commencing with two or more zeros are used to process responses which do not provide sufficient information to be coded to any field of the structure and when there is no field of education given. Other codes commencing with zero may be defined by users to facilitate the processing and storage of data, when data sets coded to ASCED contain records for entities outside the scope of ASCED. For example, these codes might be used for educational activities that are excluded from ASCED (e.g. hobby/recreational programmes).

Format of the definitions

This publication contains definitions for the broad, narrow, and detailed fields. The format of the definitions may vary between the hierarchical levels, but all contain similar elements.

The features of the broad, narrow and detailed field definitions are:

- a lead statement which describes the theoretical orientation of the programme;
- main purpose (not applicable for detailed field);
- skills learnt/theoretical content/subjects undertaken;
- a list of lower level fields contained in the field (not applicable for detailed field); and
- a list of inclusions or exclusions (as necessary).

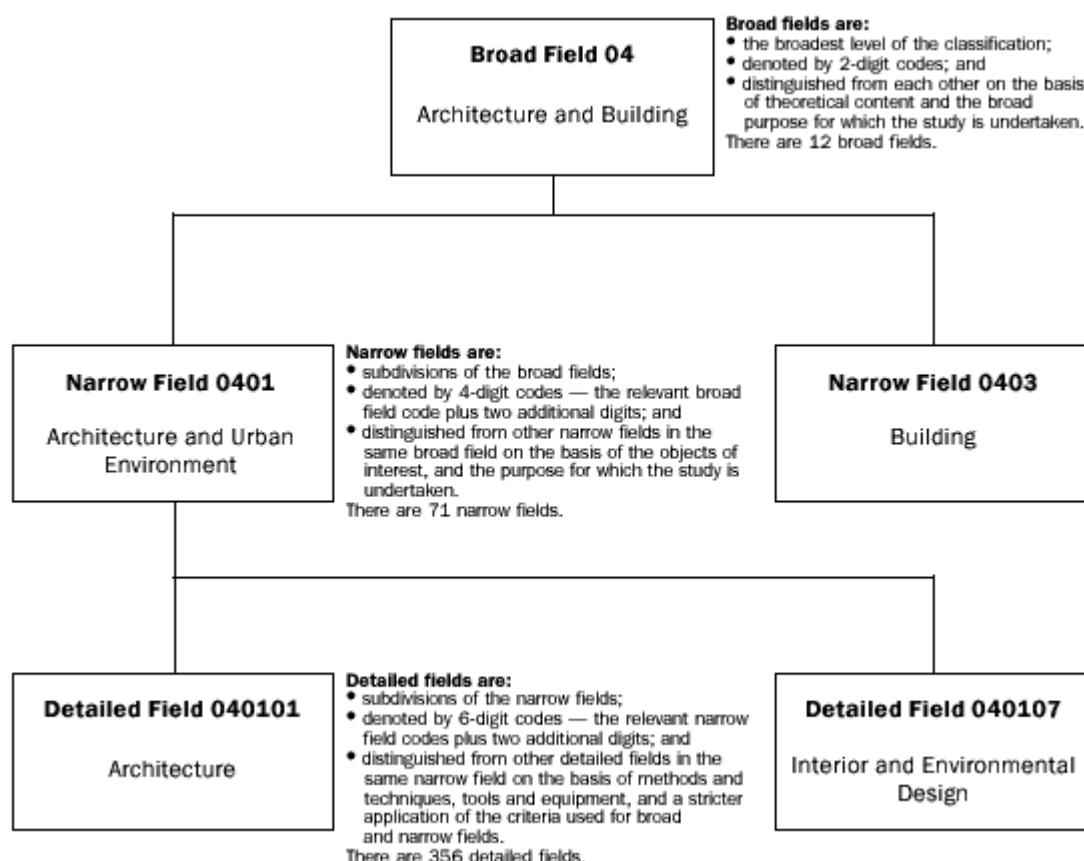
Profile of the Field of Education structure

The structure of ASCED Field of Education has three levels:

- broad field;
- narrow field; and
- detailed field.

The following is an illustration of a representative part of the Field of Education structure:

Illustration of a representative part of the Field of Education structure.



A tree diagram that shows how the structure of the ASCED Field of Education is split into three levels, broad field; narrow field; and detailed field. The top level is broad field 04 Architecture and building, there are 12 broad fields, which are described as: The broadest level of the classification; are denoted by 2-digit codes; and distinguished from each other on the basis of theoretical content and the broad purpose for which the study is undertaken. Broad field 04 splits into narrow field 0401 Architecture and urban environment, and narrow field 0403 Building. There are 71 narrow fields. Narrow fields are described as: subdivisions of the broad fields; denoted by 4-digit codes – the relevant broad field code plus two additional digits; and distinguished from other narrow fields in the same broad field on the basis of the objects of interest, and the purpose for which the study is undertaken. Narrow field 0401 splits into detailed field 040101 Architecture, and detailed field 040107 Interior and environmental design. There are 356 detailed fields. Detailed fields are described as: subdivisions of the narrow fields; denoted by 6-digit codes – the relevant narrow field codes plus two additional digits; and distinguished from other detailed fields in the same narrow field on the basis of methods and techniques, tools and equipment, and a stricter application of the criteria used for broad and narrow

fields.